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extension review

United States Department of Agriculture Winter 1987

**Rural
Revitalization**



Mary Nell Greenwood— Leader, Visionary, Friend

2 *Extension Review*

"We celebrate the life of a dedicated and much-loved partner"—Orville G. Bentley, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture for Science and Education.



Mary Nell Greenwood challenged us to reach out, to grow, to strive for excellence. Individually—and collectively as the Cooperative Extension System—she leaves us a legacy of loyalty, dedication, hard work, and commitment to the people of America.

Mary Nell Greenwood was one of us, an important member of our Extension family.

She began her career as an Extension agent in Missouri in 1951. She rose through the ranks to become Director of Extension Programs at the University of Missouri, responsible for coordinating Extension educational programs involving four campuses and 20 off-campus planning units. She joined Extension Service, USDA, as Associate Administrator in 1978, and was appointed Administrator in 1980.

Throughout her life, Dr. Greenwood was honored for her many contributions to her community, Extension, and American agriculture. Prior to her untimely death on November 15, the Senior Executive Association, an organization of the

Senior Executive Service headquartered in Washington, D.C., honored her with a significant award--The Distinguished Executive Service Award--the highest level of peer recognition presented to senior executives.

Mary Nell Greenwood's life of dedication and creativity lives on in the work of her Extension family across the Nation. Her influence, vision, and creativity is reflected in the national priority-setting system now moving into place.

We are better for her presence with us.

We commend her vision, mourn her passing, and celebrate and continue her legacy of devotion to the Cooperative Extension System.



Solving The Economic Crisis



By Senator David F. Durenberger
(Republican,
Minnesota)
United States Senate

Of the many issues which struck me as I chaired a Senate Subcommittee last spring on the financial crisis affecting our rural communities, two stand out. One is the fact that the farm economic crisis does not operate in a vacuum. Declining farm income and plummeting farmland values are only two pieces of a complicated economic puzzle which also includes changes in the broader U.S. and world economies. Adding to this puzzle are popu-

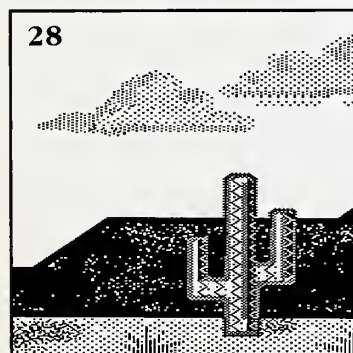
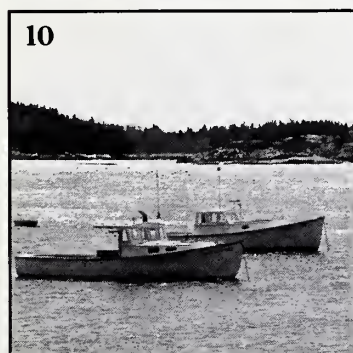
lation shifts, structural changes in agriculture and other natural resource industries, severe adjustments in the industrial economy, and reductions in federal and state aids.

Other devastating impacts of the rural crisis are hunger, family stress and violence, retail business failures, the drop in church and civic activities, insurance cancellations, and the like. In effect, the farm crisis has helped to create an environment of economic hardship and personal stress that strains the ability of rural governments to provide essential community services and facilities. In the short run, rural Americans are suffering the brunt of this current dilemma; in the long run, all Americans will be adversely affected by the crisis.

Nevertheless, within the roots of this crisis lie the seeds of rural revitalization. Public awareness and education mark

the first stage in a collaborative effort among federal and state governments, regional and local economic development associations, chambers of commerce, businesses, commodity and trade associations, educational institutions, and individuals. The Extension Service can play an important role in revitalizing rural America, and this issue of *Extension Review* describes the kind of assistance and programs Extension can provide.

Those of us involved in government, higher education, public policy, and economic development, must join together now to revitalize rural America. Otherwise, the decline in the ability of rural communities and rural Americans to cope with the dramatic economic changes they are now facing may very well become irreversible. ▲



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The *Extension Review*, quarterly publication of the Extension Service is for Extension Educators in county, state and USDA agencies. The Secretary of Agriculture has determined that the publication of this periodical is necessary in the transaction of the public business required by law of the Department. Use of funds for printing this periodical has been approved by the Director of the Office of Management and Budget. The Review is issued free by Law to workers engaged in Extension activities. For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. Send manuscript inquiries to: The Editor, Extension Service, Room 3428-S, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250. Telephone (202)447-4651.

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Rebirth In Rural Minnesota

4 **Extension Review**



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To assist farm families with budgeting and resource management and to provide new and existing small businesses with economic development, Minnesota Extension is exploring many avenues simultaneously.

Many Minnesota communities have been hard hit by the farm crisis and massive layoffs in the steel and taconite industries. To help revitalize them, Minnesota Extension has created 12 one-year assignments involving new positions and temporary replacements for its area Extension agents.

"These new assignments in the counties were made possible through a \$1.25 million allocation by the 1986 Minnesota legislature," says Patrick J. Borich, Minnesota Extension director. "It is just one example of Extension's response to revitalizing communities."

While most of the "new" area Extension agents remain in their home communities, their office locations have changed, and in some cases, several agents share the same office. These area agents are a response to the long-term effort of Project Support, initiated in 1984, and coordinated by Kathleen Mangum. Minnesota is the only Extension service currently engaged in both the administration and education portions of Mandatory Farm Credit Mediation. This program is designed for debtors and creditors to meet with a mediator in a neutral setting to work out solutions which may avoid farm foreclosure.

In the summer of 1986, Claudia Parliament, Extension agricultural economics specialist, and Sherri Johnson, Extension home economics specialist, both of the University of Minnesota, conducted special agent training in home-based

education opportunities. During this training, which cut across Extension program lines, Gordon Rose, Extension economist, introduced material on community economic assessments. Eventually, each of the 87 counties will have this local assessment of their economic base.

"It's a picture of the local economy that could help anyone thinking of starting a business," Rose says. For over a year, he explains, he gathered economic data through a question-and-answer format, and also drew on information from the State Bureau of Economic Development to create an analysis of a community's economy.

Rose's economic analyses play a part in a 6-week course, "Starting Your Own Business," conducted by Buddy G. Crewdson, Extension agricultural economist at the Small Business Development Center at the university. Crewdson's course, which will continue throughout 1987, is aimed at both current and prospective business people, and covers designing a business plan and obtaining financing.

Possible Future Workshops

This year, Extension is exploring topics for workshops that may generate potential new businesses in areas where the farm economy may be lagging. A workshop on starting a bed-and-breakfast business was scheduled for rural Wright County. Workshop topics in 1987 may include such business ventures as family day care centers, blueberry production, specialty crops, firewood sales, wood products, cottage industries, and the leasing of land for hunting.

Specialty Crops

In Koochiching County, along the Minnesota-Canadian border, farmers are working under a \$20,000 grant-loan from the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board, and concentrating on specialty crops. In 1986, cauliflower, broccoli, and cabbage were produced for the first time, with asparagus, the fourth cool-weather crop, expected to produce in three years. Seven growers have planted a total of 45 acres. Koochgrown Association, the growers organization and recipients of the grant-loan, used it to purchase cooling and icing equipment and transportation. By staggering plantings, growers expect production to run from late July to the first week in October.

Due south at Grand Rapids in Itasca County, Extension Foresters A. Scott Reed and F. Thomas Milton worked with loggers, foresters, and landowners attending an annual September weekend called North Star Expo. Participants see state-of-the-art technology in equipment displayed by 100 exhibitors. During and after this event, Extension Forester Reed conducts an economic impact study to disclose the dollar benefits of hosting such an event to the community.

Opposite: To help the lagging farm economy Minnesota is promoting specialty crops. Here, Koochiching County Extension Agent Terrance Nennich (right) checks the maturity of a broccoli planting for new growers.
Above: An ore boat passes under a bridge on Lake Superior. Minnesota is promoting tourism; shipping is always a tourist attraction.

Photographs courtesy of Don Breneman, Communication Resources, University of Minnesota.

Research On Shiitake Mushrooms

Research on shiitake mushrooms (choice Japanese mushrooms that sell for approximately \$11 a pound in gourmet food stores) is being conducted at the University of Minnesota and at Lanesboro in the southern part of the state. The first successful crops from Minnesota were reported in 1984-85 and were incubated outdoors on cut bur and red oak logs. Experiments are being conducted to discover which Minnesota hardwoods will successfully produce the mushrooms and which varieties will work in this climate. To initiate a fledgling shiitake mushroom in the state, researchers are testing the operating conditions of a controlled greenhouse to enable year-round production of this specialty crop.

Water Quality Issues

Groundwater quality is a statewide issue being addressed in Minnesota by a team appointed by the Governor. Frederick Bergsrud, Extension head of agricultural engineering, a member of the team, and John Sem, Extension program leader for community economic development, will meet with agricultural agents in southeast Minnesota to discuss groundwater issues. John Fox, Extension southeast district program leader, sees the meeting as an opportunity for "education for action."

Grants

Extension helped with the initial needs assessment when the McKnight Foundation (founded by the 3M company family) wished to aid the critical rural crisis with grant allocations. Roger Steinberg, southeast area agent at Rochester, was an assessment committee member. "What is different here," Steineberg says, "is that decisionmaking for allocations rests with the local counties. Multicounty task forces of rural citizens are working in six areas of the state to make grant decisions based on unique approaches to solving problems. Nonprofit organizations and local government units will be eligible for grants in areas of rural leadership, human services delivery, economic revitalization, and natural resources."

Funding is to continue five years with \$15 million allotted for the first two years. Early in 1987, most areas of the state will receive grant proposals.

Tourism Promoted

A new Tourism Center, housed in Extension at the university, will open to expand tourism opportunities for all Minnesotans, both customers and business owners. John Sem, Extension program leader for community economic development, says that, "Extension and the

university have long track records on public forest and park use, outdoor recreation participation, and food service management. Each of the state's 87 counties has something to offer the traveler—the Center will benefit economic growth throughout Minnesota."

Rural National Conference

In January 1987, Minnesota and Wisconsin Extension cooperated to host "A New Agenda For Rural America" national conference. Congressional delegations from both states were represented among the 300 participants and addressed the question: "Why Save Rural America?"

"We took an intense look at what is happening in rural America," says Minnesota Director Borich. "Conference topics included maintaining a healthy farm economy, rural dependence on nonfarm income sources, rural community transitions, elements of a comprehensive rural development policy, and the legislative agenda for rural development." A

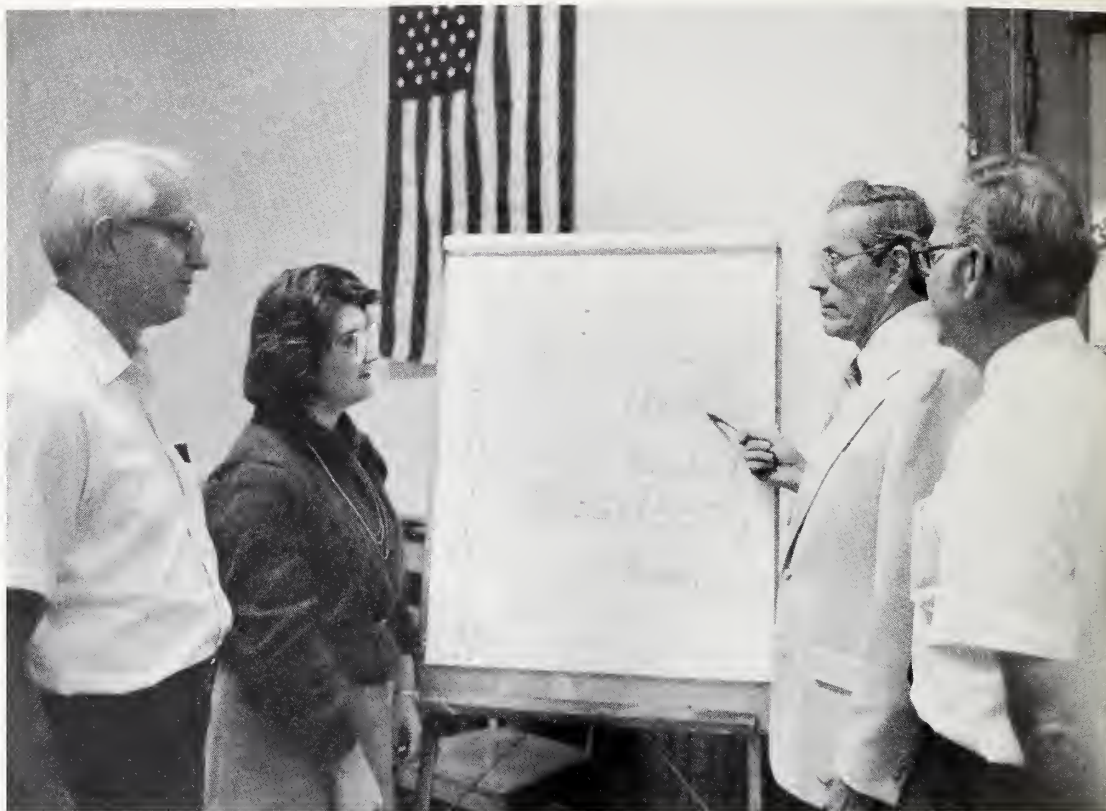


Displaced Farmers— Discovering New Possibilities

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Opposite Top: Dave Reed, (middle), Fulton County agricultural Extension agent, reviews a RE: FIT questionnaire with former dairy farmers Sue and Doug Behnfeldt, as part of an effort to discover marketable skills for a new non-farm occupation. Below: Ernest Winterhoff, a recently displaced Ohio farmer, walks to his new job at the Honda plant in Marysville. He was re-trained as a result of the statewide RE: FIT pilot program for farmers funded by ES-USDA and Ohio Extension. Above: Phil Grover (second from right), Extension CRD specialist, conducts a two-hour RE: FIT training session for Ohio Extension agents



As Ohio county agents worked with the state's farmers on computerized farm management programs over the past few years, the handwriting was on the wall. Declining commodity prices, high interest rates, decreasing land value, and Mother Nature's hail and drought, combined to set many Ohio farmers in an unrecoverable tailspin. The agents found their help ended at a time when it was most needed; when farms were lost and finances depleted.

But some county agents were not content to sit back and watch friends and neighbors lose their livelihood without offering a helping hand. They contacted Community and Natural Resource Development state staff members to see if Extension could provide help in dealing with the crises farmers faced.

What resulted was a statewide program—RE:FIT (Rural Economics: Farmers In Transition). Major components of the pilot program are identifying skills transferable to off-the-farm occupations and providing an extensive referral system.

Outplacement Program

"As we took a closer look at the situation, we gathered relevant information on outplacement programs, but none of these programs pertained to farmers," says Phil Grover, community resource development specialist and statewide RE:FIT coordinator. "The vast geographic area, the independence of each operator, and the lifelong attachment to this career choice explains why a special outplacement program was needed for farmers," he says.

To implement the pilot program, Grover requested an Extension Service-USDA special project grant. Of the \$60,000 appropriated, \$20,000 was earmarked for the RE:FIT Pro-

gram. Ohio Extension provided the remainder of the needed funds. Program developers devised a series of pencil-and-paper instruments which county agents administer to farmers and their family members to match their skills, interests, and attitudes with possible career choices. A preliminary discussion form provides a guide for the agent in the initial interview. Answers to these questions determine a particular family's stage of need.

Overcoming Tunnel Vision

"Many of our farmers develop attitudes that they are not qualified for any position off the farm," says Dave Reed, Fulton County agricultural Extension agent.

"When you consider all the skills a farmer has honed on the farm—veterinarian, plumber, mechanic, recordkeeper, manager—it is evident that

farmers and family members are more talented than they lead themselves or others to believe," he continues. "The RE:FIT Program allows them to have a different perspective of themselves off the farm."

Once they accept the fact that they must leave the farm, many farmers practice tunnel vision, considering only those occupations they had prior to farming. When faced with the possibility of leaving his Fulton County dairy farm, Doug Behnfeldt restricted his viable options to either running a backhoe or working on an oil well, the two jobs he held before he started farming. "I thought these were my only marketable skills."

The RE:FIT instruments showed that Doug's real interests and aptitude lie in natural resource management, a career alternative neither Doug nor his wife Sue considered before answering the series of questionnaires. Doug hopes to pursue his degree once his wife is finished with her educational goals.

Referral Services

In the second phase of the program, Extension acts as a referral service for those needing information on community services, job skills, job placement, and training options.

"At this stage, we join with a number of other state and federal organizations to open up an array of options for our clientele," Grover says. "What's sad is the number of supportive programs farmers don't know about and, therefore, don't take advantage of." For example, the Ohio Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) through the Ohio Bureau of Employment Services offers 2 years of free education to qualifying individuals. And our distressed farmers and their spouses qualify. Their particular program pays full tuition for qualifying families.



"I never dreamed they would pay me to go to school," Sue Behnfeldt says. She is enrolled in a 9-month certificate program in accounting. Sue will also receive funds from the Ohio Instructional Grants and other financial resources. The programs even allow her to recoup \$5 per day for travel, a baby sitter, and lunch. The JTPA also pays about half the person's wages during on-the-job training.


Stimulating Communication

In addition to the original intent of the instruments—identifying and matching skills and interests—agents find they serve an additional function for some couples, says Reed. They help stimulate communication.

After they completed the questionnaires, Doug and Sue Behnfeldt tried to guess how the other had responded to the questions. For the most part they were able to predict their

partner's answers. But not always. And it was these questions that stimulated comments like, "I didn't know you felt that way about that."

According to Grover, planning for the third part of RE:FIT is underway. "We are working on a way to identify the early warning signs of the development of the crisis so we will have more time to make changes and decisions on farming, alternative careers, training and education, and supplemental income," he says.

While the program is still in the pilot stage, Grover expects to have the program in full operation by 1987. Those interested in receiving the instruments should contact: Joe Heimlich, CNRD Program Assistance, Ag. Administration Building, 2120 Fyffe Road, Columbus, Ohio 43210. 



FCL'ers—Meeting Rural Needs

8 Extension Review

Carolyn Bigwood*
Writer-Editor
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USDA

Right: Jo Frisby, FCL participant and lecturer, helped improve life for her tiny community of Chickaloon, Alaska, as president of the Chickaloon Pass Improvement Association. Here, she lectures on agenda styles in a program called "Effective Meeting Techniques" to participants from small non-profit organizations at a community college in Palmer. Opposite: Ellen Takazawa, Hawaii FCL'er, uses her FCL training to help interested persons renovate a local community center in Pepekeo, a sugar plantation community outside Hilo. The group she led secured \$60,000 in county funds to renovate the center's kitchen and other facilities.



Whether organizing a support group to help families of the mentally ill, negotiating a 40-acre land swap for community use, or initiating other needed services, Family Community Leadership (FCL) participants are making positive changes in rural and small communities throughout the West.

Using leadership and other skills acquired in the FCL program, participants actively identify and address specific needs which are close to them and important in their communities.

FCL is an educational program developed by Extension and the National Extension Homemakers Council, Inc., in cooperation with the Western Rural Development Center at Oregon State University. The pilot program began in 1981 in six western states—Alaska, Colorado, Hawaii, New Mexico, Oregon, and Washington.

FCL helps participants in these states better understand the complexities of public issues and learn how to resolve community problems through applied leadership skills.

Hawaii FCL'ers

In Hawaii, FCL'er Ellen Takazawa used her training to help organize interested persons to renovate the Pepekeo Community Center. Pepekeo is a small rural sugar plantation community outside of Hilo on the Big Island of Hawaii.

Takazawa and neighbors began meeting once a week. Eventually a group of about 25 attended a public hearing on the matter and secured \$60,000 in county funds to help renovate the center's kitchen, screens, windows, and other facilities.

When her own son became ill, another Hilo FCL member Carolyn Oki organized a support group in her community to help families of the mentally ill.

The group, Big Island Alliance for Mentally Ill (BIAMI), are meeting with staff of the State Department of Health and other support agencies in an effort to establish a psychiatric ward at the local hospital and a group housing project for the mentally ill. Oki says her participation in FCL gave her the confidence and skills she needed to start the group.

On Maui, FCL participant Mary Monden helped organize a local community association that addresses problems and concerns of the rural farm community of Kula. Since her participation in FCL, Monden has become increasingly involved in her community.

On the tiny island of Lanai, FCL trainers are providing leadership in a variety of community organizations and activities to enrich the lives of the 2,100 residents there. FCL'ers are helping form the "Friends of the Library" group, conducting a grant search for the only preschool on the island, and helping to organize a hospital auxiliary group.

Oregon Efforts

"How can we generate better funding for our library?"

"How can the library system better serve the unincorporated area of our rural community?"

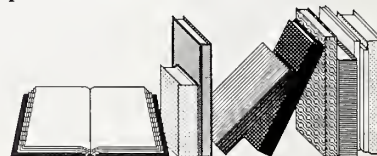
"What should we look like in 5 years, 10 years?"

These are some concerns addressed by the Library Board in Douglas County, Oregon, with the help of group facilitators trained through the FCL program.

The Douglas County library system serves a county population of over 92,000. FCL trainers Kate Lilley and Linda Foster met with the Library Board to discuss a strategy that would help planners answer some tough questions and involve the community.

The FCL'ers say they knew it would be a long process. "But group facilitating is no speedy process if done right," says Lilley.

According to state FCL Coordinator Greg Tillson, this is just one of a broad range of projects Oregon FCL trainers have undertaken to solve problems in their communities.



Revitalizing Chickaloon

Chickaloon, Alaska, has benefited from the efforts of two FCL participants, Jo Frisby and Rita Pfauth (recently deceased).

Coal mining established Chickaloon on the Alaska map back in 1917. A hospital, school, and businesses were built. The railroad carried coal to the coastal community of Seward where it was used as fuel for ships until oil replaced coal. Then Chickaloon became a ghost town.

The town was revitalized in the 1960s when homesteads opened up. A school was established, but no town developed.

Today Chickaloon children commute by bus 18 to 30 miles to schools in other towns. The nearest volunteer fire department is 18 miles away and is not responsible for Chickaloon residents.

Frisby and Pfauth became involved in FCL in 1984. Both wanted to make life better for their community of 300.

The women began sharing their FCL training with members of the Chickaloon Pass Improvement Association. Frisby became president and promptly negotiated a 40-acre land swap with the borough. Borough land had been designated for community use, but the parcel did not include enough level, usable land. She and other community members surveyed the land, then involved borough officials in the survey so they were well informed of the problems. The next step was to negotiate the swap with the borough assembly, which was accomplished last year.

Other accomplishments of these Alaskan FCL'ers include writing a grant proposal and giving public testimony to obtain funds to build a community center, and developing a map that identifies where each resident lives so neighbors can easily locate each other if there's a house fire or other emergency.

A Gift For Bloomfield

In New Mexico, FCL Trainer and state Board Member Julie Hunter wanted to do something with the refuse-strewn triangle of land on Highway 64 in Bloomfield that was such an eyesore.

In 2 years, Hunter and a core group of six friends plus community members and Extension turned an illegal dumping ground into a beautiful park.

Initially Hunter and her friends entered the *Family Circle* magazine contest, "Make America Beautiful." Hunter thought entering the contest would ensure commitment on the part of the people. It worked. They were the 1985 national winners.



The original triangle grew to 1 1/2 acres with six large beds of flowers. A coalition of community groups prepare, plant, and maintain the beds.

Extension provided the landscaping, plant selection, and planting instructions. The group raised \$750 for the sprinkler system, seeds, and plants.

Residents are grateful to the FCL-trained volunteers for the gift they provided and consider the park the center of beauty in Bloomfield.



FCL Efforts Expand

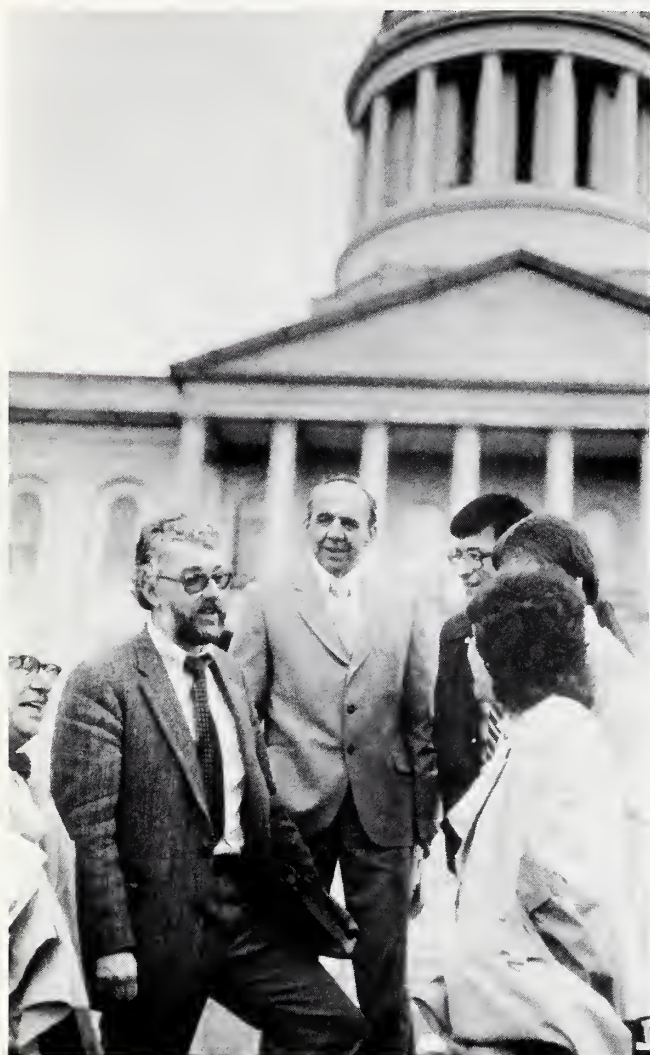
In September 1986, participants from 42 states and Guam in addition to the original six states attended a national FCL dissemination workshop. Many states plan to begin FCL programs. The W.K. Kellogg Foundation provided funds for the pilot FCL project. Recently Kellogg's Chairman of the Board Russell Mawby announced that because of the program's success the Kellogg Foundation will provide up to \$50,000 to any state with an approved plan for an FCL program.



**The following persons contributed to this article: Jean S. M. Young, FCL Coordinator, University of Hawaii, Honolulu; Patricia E. Aune, Extension Home Economist, Palmer, Alaska; Greg Tillson, FCL Coordinator, Oregon State University, Corvallis; and Mary Ellen Payne, FCL Coordinator, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces.*

Leaders For Libertyville, USA

10 Extension Review



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Scott Vaitones had an uneasy feeling. Surveying the world beyond his lobster boat, the then 34-year-old fisherman from Tenants Harbor, Maine, saw what he considered problems in the shellfish industry. He wanted to help solve those problems, but he didn't know where to start.

Vaitones found a partial answer to his dilemma in New England Rural Leadership (NERL), a regional Extension program designed to develop effective, imaginative leaders for rural and small-town New England. If you can't fight city hall, NERL seems to suggest, why not move in?

Pilot Program Adopted

NERL evolved from a pilot program established in Pennsylvania by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and supervised by Daryl Heasley of Pennsylvania State University. Later, the Northeast Center for Rural Development at Cornell adopted the idea, designed the present 2-year course drawing on the educational resources of the Cooperative Extension Services in six northeastern states, and, with the aid of Extension staff in those states, secured a \$752,200 grant from Kellogg to initiate the program.

As Extension Community Development Specialist and Maine NERL Coordinator Conrad Griffin recalls, frustrated would-be leaders from all walks of Maine life suddenly emerged, seeking admission to NERL. In 1982 and 1984 combined, 110 Mainers applied to participate in the program.

Shortage Of Leaders

The deluge of applicants may have stemmed, in part, from an often underestimated problem in rural communities: the shortage of trained leadership. Some areas, unable to pay professionals, rely on volunteers with little, if any, experience in public decisionmaking or insight into the issues facing their town, region, and state. Towns that can afford to pay for leadership may have trouble recruiting and retaining capable leaders. And the void is deepening as responsibility for managing growth and change shifts from federal and state governments to communities.

Announcement of the NERL program also seemed to touch a need felt on a personal level—a drive to help improve one's community. Certainly, Mainers selected to participate seemed unfazed by the course requirements outlined in the brochure: attendance at 10 3-day-weekend workshops over 2 years, seminars at state

capitols and in Washington, D.C., plus a summer assignment.

Through the program, participants would improve their understanding of local, regional, and national issues; of how groups and governments behave; and of themselves as catalysts for change.

First Program Cycle

At the beginning of the first 2-year cycle, 83 participants from six states met at a hotel in Massachusetts where they were declared citizens of a mock community, "Libertyville, USA," and faced with a vote on whether or not to build a new school.

That exercise, like others that followed, taught participants not only about local decision-making but also about their own strengths and weaknesses. Charles Woodward, a University of Maine crop technician and Libertyville's "mayor," comments, "I was simply amazed at how I wheel and deal. I still do it, but at least I'm aware of it now."

Continuing through the program, NERL'ers tackled an imposing agenda. Workshops focused on topics including "Public Issues vis-a-vis Individual Concerns," "Values Clarification," "Human Resources of New England," and "Networking/Capacity Building."

Increased Confidence

Surviving the challenges NERL presented brought increased confidence. And that, according to many graduates, is the program's greatest reward.

For Cathy Newell, an adult education director in Bethel, NERL became "a safe place to try out new skills." She used

Above: Hancock County Extension Agent Ron Beard (second from left) meets with fellow members of the New England Rural Leadership, (NERL), a regional Extension program, at the Maine state capitol in Augusta. Beard is Maine coordinator of the NERL, an organization that develops effective leaders in New England.

the self-assuredness she gained to participate in fundraising for a nearby public television station and to help administrative teams in her school district become more effective.

According to Quenten Clark, a power dispatcher from Brownville, NERL "gave me the push I needed" to win election to the school board, speak before hostile audiences, and secure legislation for a new school building. Last spring, Clark made a bid for a seat in the state legislature.

And lobsterman Vaitones used the training to become a lobbyist for the Maine Lobsterman's Association—"something I wouldn't have done 2 or 3 years ago," he says. Recently, he left lobstering to serve as business manager for a local school district.

Camaraderie Highly Valued

For other NERL'ers, the camaraderie inspired by the program was the most valued dividend. "I've had better discussions going to and from NERL meetings with people from down east than anywhere else in the past 10 years," helicopter pilot and former Calais Mayor John Cashwell allowed.

Several Maine Extension agents also participated in the NERL training, reaping insights and skills they have since put to good use in their jobs. Hancock County Agent Ron Beard liked the program so much that he recently agreed to succeed Griffin as Maine coordinator.

Leadership Curriculum Expands

Other NERL graduates tend to share Beard's dedication. Confirmed NERL'ers Vaitones, Newell, Woodward, Margaret Russell, Karen Kingsley, and others are now plowing skills they learned through the program into LEAD, Inc. (Leadership, Education, and Development), a new, expanded leadership curriculum for Maine.



While Maine will continue to participate in New England-wide leadership training, LEAD, a nonprofit entity, will offer training for more aspiring rural and small-town leaders in Maine than the original program can accommodate.

"People were screaming to get into NERL," Griffin explains, "but the program could admit only 25 percent of Mainers who applied." Then, too, NERL graduates who wanted a refresher course or more advanced training had nowhere to turn.

To help respond to those needs, LEAD will raise funds for leadership training, define curricula, and conduct training programs through Extension and other groups.

Griffin, who is working with Extension agents Beard, Doug Babbirk, and Theresa Ferrari to develop LEAD's course content, says the new program will draw heavily on NERL traditions.



In addition, LEAD will introduce some new features—a more flexible schedule and separate curricula for emerging and existing leaders. Extension and other University of Maine faculty members, along with government and industry leaders, will serve as trainers.

Involved agents and specialists see LEAD as a way to make leadership training an integral part of Extension education in Maine. More specifically, it is a way to keep adding, as Griffin says, to "a cadre of people we're going to continue hearing about," rural Mainers with the skill, confidence, and vision to lead. ▲

*Above and below:
Lobster boats anchor
off the Maine coast. Scott
Vaitones, a lobsterman from
Tenants Harbor, found the
way to solve problems in the
lobster industry was to take
leadership training with the
NERL. Afterward, he served
as lobbyist for the Maine
Lobsterman's Association.*

*Photographs courtesy of
University of Maine
Extension.*

Revitalizing Rural America— ES-ECOP Task Force Report

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Diversity is the hallmark of rural America. But at the end of the decade, rural America is at a critical juncture. Its vitality is being tested. The ES-ECOP Task Force cited critical issues facing rural America: diminishing economic competitiveness of rural areas; dependence on a few sources of income for many rural communities; growing service demands on local governments as revenues diminish; difficulty many rural institutions are experiencing in adjusting to the structural changes in resource-based industries; dependence on volunteer leadership in rural areas; and need to maintain the quality of natural resources for the long-term well-being of rural areas and the Nation.

"Revitalizing Rural America," is one of eight National Priority Initiatives identified by a National Priorities Policy Task Force, jointly appointed by ECOP and ES-USDA.

Extension Role

The task force named four education and training elements

that relate to Extension's role in revitalizing rural America. These are the need to—

1. Provide a perspective on local development issues;
2. Increase the knowledge base for individual and community decisions;
3. Develop the skills necessary to achieve individual and community goals; and
4. Help to shape the decisionmaking environment.

Extension's contribution to rural revitalization applies to three major impact areas:

Economic Development

The general strategies Extension has outlined for economic development of rural communities are to improve the efficiency of existing businesses; increase new business formations; capture new dollars from both inside and outside the community; attract new basic industry/employers; and capture financial aids from broader levels of government.

Institution Building

Extension institution building efforts can include: building networks among local, state, regional, and federal organizations; improving fiscal and operational management (public and private); increasing understanding of policy alternatives and their implementation; and supporting rural leaders with information, training, and education.

Cultural Change

Extension can contribute to cultural change by helping rural families deal with economic and social changes; understanding and interpreting trends that shape strategic local decisions; assisting with problemsolving and public policy decisions; and building the leadership capacity to plan for the future.

The ES-ECOP Task Force believes that by generating the same type of commitment and energy to revitalizing rural America as Extension did to increasing agricultural efficiency, the Cooperative Extension System can help rural America realize its potential. ★

When The Bottom Line Is Community Action

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Tiny Necedah, Wisconsin, population 700, and growing Portage, population 8,000, do not appear to have much in common. But both municipalities are now charting their own economic development courses because they took advantage of the Community Analysis Program offered by Extension statewide faculty and CRD agents over the past 2 years.

As a result of this educational program, Necedah has a new bakery and a developing industrial park. Portage boasts two new tenants—Dealers Manufacturing and Dawn Foods—in its industrial park. Portage can now also claim a revitalized downtown with rehabilitated store and office fronts, better traffic flow, solid waste disposal, and promotion and tourism efforts.

"The Community Economic Analysis Program was based on the conviction that most economic initiatives are generated locally," says Ayse Somersan, Extension Community, Natural Resource and Economic Development state program leader. "The program is not an end in itself, but a tool communities can use to plot action to improve their economic status."

Programs In 36 Counties

In less than 3 years, Glen Pulver and Ron Shaffer, Extension CRD specialists, University of Wisconsin, conducted economic analysis programs in 36 Wisconsin communities. Working with Extension CRD agents integral to the endeavor's success, Extension statewide faculty helped leaders study their community's economic activity over a period of time, compare it with similar community economic profiles, and identify what the community does to create jobs and generate income.

After the county CRD agent assembles representative, interested community leaders, CES statewide faculty help the county agent present the community economic analysis program in four 2-hour sessions.

The sessions review anticipated changes in the national and state economy, and analyze community economic activity over time and compare it with similar communities in the state. Participants complete a 20-item questionnaire that helps them examine community economic development efforts. In the final session, CES faculty help local leaders set priorities and develop strategies. The community assigns and delegates tasks and the CRD agent provides the important follow-up and assistance.

Initiatives

Community leaders identify the following initiatives in their action plan to increase jobs and income: improve the efficiency of existing firms; improve community ability to capture outside dollars; attract new employers; encourage new business formation from within the community; and increase government aid.

The CES Community Economic Analysis Program differs from assistance available through other sources. CES statewide faculty maintain large secondary databases, providing local leaders community level information and the opportunity to compare their community with similar ones across the state. Community leaders receive the Community Economic Preparedness Index to assess their economic development efforts, as well as analytical tools required to conduct similar economic analyses.

Most important, local leaders are not provided "expert" recommendations, but set their own economic development action plan based on good information and enlightened self-assessment. Developing leadership and expanding horizons of local leaders are critical program ingredients. But the bottom line is community action. The program requires local citizen commitment to translate their goals and priorities into reality.

CRD agents who have gone through the program with one or more communities in their counties have started to work with other interested communities in their counties without waiting for available specialist time. Such county CRD agent growth and response is critical if the program is to be offered to most of Wisconsin's 1,500 communities interested in economic development. ▲

Extracted from the Factsheet, **Community Economic Analysis Helps Revitalize Necedah And Portage**, a publication of Community, Natural Resource and Economic Development, at the University of Wisconsin-Extension.

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*Portage, Wisconsin,
(population 8,000), took
advantage of the
Community Economic
Analysis program offered by
Extension faculty and CRD
agents. Then, with help from
tax incremental financing,
Portage's Downtown
Revitalization Committee
added trees, grates, and
antique streetlights to give
downtown a new look. Ellen
Swan, Portage Area
Chamber of Commerce
executive director, and Ray
Lenzi, Columbia County
CRD agent, instrumental in
this refurbishment, view this
example of community pride
in action.*

*Photograph courtesy of
Michael A. Smith, University
of Wisconsin-Extension.*

Cooperatives—Tool For Rural Revitalization

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Wisconsin is fostering and assisting diverse cooperative businesses as one way to strengthen the state's rural agricultural and nonfarm economies.

Cooperatives can provide a needed economic service not presently available in rural areas or a service that can increase net returns to members.

Cooperatives differ from other types of businesses in that users own and control the business; control of the business is democratic and based on one member, one vote; membership in cooperatives is open and voluntary; net earnings are reinvested in the cooperative to improve services or are distributed to members; and emphasis is on continuing education for directors, staff, and members.

Wisconsin Tradition

Wisconsin has a long tradition of cooperative activity, particularly in agricultural and rural areas. In the 1920s and 1930s agricultural colleges and Extension actively educated farmers on cooperative principles and assisted in forming agricultural cooperatives.

In 1962 cooperatives and the University of Wisconsin joined forces to form the International Cooperative Training Center on the Madison campus. The Center provided training and technical assistance to cooperative personnel from developing countries. In 1970 all cooperative training programs combined into one unit—the University Center for Cooperatives. During the 1970s agricultural cooperatives were the focus of the Center's domestic programs.

Services Expand

Recently the Center expanded services to include consumer and worker-owned cooperatives. Emphasis is on new uses of the cooperative business model that hold promise of major economic impact. Programming includes training for members, boards, and managers; developing educational materials; conducting feasibility studies; and assisting with organizing, consolidations, and mergers.

"The demand for innovative cooperative programming is even greater than we expected," says Frank Groves, chair of the Center. "We have found a variety of needs in rural areas can be met with the cooperative business model."

To respond to those needs, Center staff published a manual, *Building Consumer Cooperatives*, for Extension agents. The handbook explains how to determine the need for and organize a cooperative business.

"Cooperatives are attractive because they are owned and controlled locally," says Cooperative Specialist Tom Schomisch. "They are an effective way to keep profits at home and local investor capital in rural areas."

Extension Assistance

Rural groups and organizations have formed cooperatives in a wide variety of industries. Extension staff are assisting these new and potential cooperative owners.

Dick Vilstrup, Extension professor of meat and animal science, provided a preliminary feasibility analysis and advice on organization and structure to a farmer-owned infrared tested hay marketing cooperative.

"Since the cooperative has been in operation, we've seen the price of Wisconsin hay move from among the lowest in the country to among the highest," says Vilstrup.

Cooperative Housing

Seventy-nine percent of Wisconsin's rural elderly households own their own homes. High financial and physical maintenance costs, however, often leave little alternative to the elderly but to allow their homes to fall into disrepair.

"Cooperative housing offers a good opportunity to meet housing needs of the elderly in non-metropolitan areas," says Extension Housing Specialist John Merrill.

"Cooperatives can combine the equity of rural elderly homeowners and a number of sources of loans available to cooperatives to provide sheltered housing options," he adds.

Merrill worked with the Center for Cooperatives to sponsor a statewide conference, "Affordable Housing, The Cooperative Solution," which identified opportunities and difficulties in developing cooperative housing for the rural elderly. He developed a slide show on cooperative housing for use by county Extension agents and community groups.

Key To Success

Cooperatives in rural Wisconsin have proved successful when a community with a strong core of leaders identifies a mutually shared objective; potential members work together for mutual benefit; and members support the new cooperative with their investment, patronage, and participation. ▲



Top: A cooperative grain elevator in the Midwest.

Below: A typical branch cooperative display room offering farm supplies.

Wisconsin is fostering cooperative organizations to strengthen both the state's rural agricultural and non-farm economies.

Photographs courtesy of Agricultural Cooperative Service.

Surviving In The Rural West

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COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE
WESTERN RURAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER

**SMALL
BUSINESS
EDUCATION
WORKSHOP:**

**Survival
Techniques**

In today's economic climate, small rural business people desperately need strong business education and survival techniques. Recent Small Business Education Workshops in the West provided this much-needed strategy and expertise.

Sponsored by the Western Rural Development Center at Oregon State University and Extension Services in the 13 western states, the series of four workshops in rural communities are part of a nationwide Extension effort to revitalize rural America.

"We really appreciate Extension bringing business education to our community" is the phrase repeated as Extension business specialists work with local resource people and citizens in New Mexico, Nevada, Utah, and California.

Responding To Change

Each of the four rural development centers (Western, North Central, Northeastern, and Southern) has mounted a strong effort in business education as Extension responds to changes in rural economies. The farm crisis, mining shutdowns, and loss of industries have made it necessary for people to seek other employment. Their communities also lose the businesses that provide support and services, so unless people simply migrate away, they must establish businesses of their own.

Extension agents and specialists have redefined their roles and developed information to help rural communities meet these new challenges. The farm crisis precipitated much of the latest effort.

"A survey of farmers in Montana shows that 45 percent of those interviewed did not expect to be in agriculture by 1990," reports Allen Bjergo, Montana Extension community development specialist.

Workshops Initiated

During 1983, the Western Rural Development Center sponsored a series of workshops for communities in transition. These "Hard Times" sessions revealed many opportunities for development in rural communities and motivated Robert Coppedge, business development specialist at New Mexico State University and one of the Hard Times group leaders, to formulate the Small Business Education Workshops along with Marion Bentley, associate director of Business and Economic Development Services at Utah State University, and Tom Harris, associate professor, Department of Agricultural Economics, at the University of Nevada.

Faculty for the workshops first met at Reno, Nevada, and later joined personnel from the other three rural development centers for a training conference at Memphis, Tennessee. The small mining and tourism town of Raton, New Mexico, was the site of the first workshop.

Finding Alternative Income

Communities once dependent on agriculture or other basic industries are often ill-prepared to face change, and they may be far from universities, schools of business, or other agencies that can offer assistance. People tend to want to stay in their communities even when farmland is consolidated and their farmhouse is surrounded by land now owned by others. Some people will open and operate businesses with the resources they have left. Others may begin to process and market alternative products to supplement farm income.

According to Bjergo, some Montana farmers have added value to farm products by making specialty cheese with farm-produced milk or by drying flowers and packaging them for retail sale. A wheat farmer established a custom slaughter plant that employs him and some of his neighbors during the off-season. Other farmers weld and sell cattle chutes and stock racks in the winter. Farmers who have been forced off their operations stay in their home communities by manufacturing and selling posts, poles, and house logs. Another kept his private plane and uses it to sell log homes nationwide. Extension helped each of these entrepreneurs to plan, borrow money, and market their products.

Overcoming Obstacles

Rural people who have traditionally relied on income from farming operations or from employment in mining or another resource-based industry, usually face several obstacles when they endeavor to establish a business enterprise, either as a supplementary or primary source of funds.

They tend to lack the skills and understanding to develop an effective business plan or to prepare sufficient documentation and financial statements when they approach investors or lenders. People starting or expanding a business also need skills in employee and customer relations and should understand how to obtain market information and plan marketing strategies.

Needs Addressed

The Small Business Education Workshops addressed these needs. Few of the attendees, for example, had ever seen a business plan. Some of the first plans Bjergo prepared were copied and

circulated among bankers who had formerly relied upon statements of net worth but found they needed much more information in the current economy. Nonprofit groups were urged to fill out business plans since they must also balance their books and repay loans.

Bentley conducted sessions in consumer and employee relations. Harris and Mike Mooney, Extension specialist at the University of Nevada, helped local agents work with chambers of commerce to develop and evaluate surveys of merchants and customers. George Goldman, Extension specialist at the University of California, along with Coppedge secured specialists in marketing, law, cash flow, and other subjects requested by participants.

The closing workshop session featured training in stress management, developed by Washington State University Extension Specialist Martha Lamberts.

Positive Evaluation

Evaluations of the workshops were favorable but, as Mooney says, most important is that "people who missed the first workshop keep calling us back for more instruction."

The Western Rural Development Center and Extension Services in the 13 western states will continue to bring rural business people timely educational and other forms of assistance that can help them survive and thrive in their communities. ▲

Future Issues

Production schedules and focus of future issues of Extension Review are listed below:

● Summer 1987.

"Financial Strategies: Farm, Home, Community," article deadline April 10, 1987.

● Fall 1987.

"Competitiveness and Profitability of American Agriculture," article deadline June 1, 1987.

● Winter 1988

"Economic Development," article deadline August 15, 1987

● Spring 1988

"Conservation And Management of Natural Resources," article deadline November 15, 1987.

Creating A Community From A Crossroads

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Immokalee (population 15,000) is situated at a crossroads in the vastness of the Everglades. This town in Collier County at the agricultural heart of southwest Florida is heavily populated by new immigrants and a winter influx of migrant pickers who work at the vegetable packing plants. Until recently, Immokalee was a make-shift place, too temporary to clean up or brighten again.

Currently, Immokalee's image is changing rapidly. "We had a long way to go," says Denise Coleman, Extension agent from the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS). "Immokalee was for many just a worksite at an intersection, a crossroads. Now it is becoming a community and the community is finding its voice."

Many believe the mechanism for developing this community spirit followed the Learn To Lead Program which Denise Coleman began pilot testing from her IFAS office.

"Before the program," Coleman points out, "there was no means to develop community spirit and no recognized leaders for the segments of the community."

Immokalee's population is nearly half Hispanic. Many Haitian immigrants who are not yet citizens and who do not speak English have settled in the town. During the winter nearly half of Immokalee's population merely come to town for a little while—to teach, to pick vegetables, or to provide the services of county government. Approximately 75 percent of the school teachers commute. When the migrant pickers arrive during the winter the population of the town nearly doubles.

"There was no forum to bring the groups together," Coleman says. "There was no government except that provided by the county from Naples, a well-to-do community 40 miles away on the Gulf of Mexico. Immokalee had no lines of communication for citizens to express their views and hold their leaders accountable. Many county officials felt the same way. The officials wanted to connect with the citizens of Immokalee as badly as the citizens wanted to connect with them."

Forums

In 1982, Denise Coleman, with other IFAS Extension specialists, began the first Learn To Lead Program for the citizens of Immokalee. "These forums more resembled a town meeting than a classroom," she says.

Approximately 200 citizens attended these forums which focused on leadership theory, crime prevention, growth management, and barriers to leadership. From these forums par-

ticipants learned to assess community needs and how to communicate and coordinate with leading officials about their priorities.

This first phase led to the creation of a crime watch group and united citizens so that they established a community center.

Leaders were identified and approximately 40 participants attended the second phase courses in Public Problem Analysis, Group Communication and Managing Conflict, Community Organization And Structure, and The Social Action Process for themselves.

"Coleman's program in Collier County was a very successful pilot test," says Beau Beaulieu, the IFAS rural sociologist who developed the course materials. "The Learn To Lead Program helped people climb over the walls of cultural differences to meet each other as fellow human beings with common goals and feelings. The people conducted a needs assessment for their community and developed a plan of work to address these needs."

Leadership Achievements

Ophelia Allen, a one-time teacher's aide, is now a candidate for the school board. Allen is the first black to run for office in Collier County. Gilberto Gomez, former vegetable picker, is canvassing the Hispanic community to register voters and encourage them to vote for Allen.

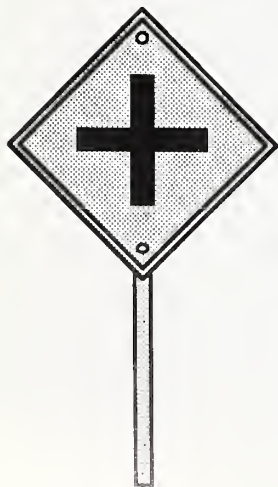
As a result of the program, Immokalee now has a new park near its school. Leaders are working to attract a new industry—citrus—to the area. A community program is active in combatting drug use in school. Public housing residents are learning to form associations that will serve their needs.

Anne Goodnight, county commissioner, says, "These achievements are forming the basis for a master plan for Immokalee."

Assistant Collier County Manager Neil Dorrill, former corporate chair who lives in Naples, says the program helped him as much as the citizens of Immokalee. "Before the Learn To Lead Program and my visits to Immokalee I did not know the people or their concerns. That's all changed now."

"Immokalee," Denise Coleman says proudly, "is now a community where people are taking responsibility for their lives and surroundings. They have learned to speak up."

In September 1986, Denise Coleman was awarded the State Leadership Development Award by the Florida Association of Extension Home Economics Agents.



Alternative Crops—More To It Than Planting Seed

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Alternative crops and marketing methods can help some farmers stay in business but they should not be viewed as a complete solution to farm problems. The idea that alternative crops pose limits as well as opportunities dominated a recent 3-day conference on Alternative Farming Opportunities In The South held at Mississippi State University. Over 200 persons from across the South attended the conference which was sponsored by the Southern Rural Development Center at Mississippi State University, the Farm Foundation, the Tennessee Valley Authority, and the Southern Legislative Conference.

"Adversity in agriculture presents a great challenge to those who work with farmers," Lee Polopolus, professor of food and resource economics at the University of Florida, told agricultural researchers and officials. "Alternative crops do have a niche in agriculture," he said. "They are not the solution for every farmer, but there is a place for many of these enterprises."

Farmers in Mississippi and the mid-south have expressed interest in recent years in alternative crops ranging from blueberries and muscadines and alfalfa sprouts to gourds, catfish, Christmas trees, and others.

Difficulties Should Be Stressed

While some crops may hold more promise than others, officials at the conference agreed the time is ripe to address the needs of farmers faced with unparalleled adversity in traditional crops. Speakers at the conference also agreed that states should become more involved in encouraging alternative crop production among farmers.

"Those helping farmers should emphasize the difficulty in starting an alternative crop operation," P. James Rathwell, Extension economist from Clemson University, South Carolina, told the audience. "Critical elements of success are understanding the limits of one's resources, such as labor, proper soil and irrigation, and the need to work constantly the first year." Rathwell pointed out that alternatives do exist but each one must be critically evaluated on the basis of an individual farmer's operation.

Aid Needed To Find Markets

Larry Bauer, professor of agricultural economics, Clemson University, stated that an important function of the states is to find ways to help farmers sell alternative crops. "We know we can't solve all the problems of farmers in the South, but in this way we can have a positive influence," he said.

R. J. Hildreth, managing director of the Farm Foundation, a Chicago-based nonprofit organization to improve rural life, reminded the group not to overlook the mixing of off-farm income with traditional and alternative crops. "Perhaps we need to focus more on improving the well-being of farm families rather than trying to preserve the traditional family farm," he said. "Alternative crops will increase farmers' income but farmers cannot depend on them totally."

Bob Coffey, a blueberry producer from Rogers, Arkansas, told the conference audience that crops such as blueberries looked promising as an alternative source of income. "If a grower does his homework there is a place for this market," he said.

Other speakers stressed the need for farmers to develop goals, realistically assess their resources, define risks, and identify markets before investing large sums in alternative ventures.



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Extension Writer-Editor
and
Karen L. Moore
Extension News Editor
Mississippi State University

Boom Crops Promise Economic Boost

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Extension in Louisiana is emphasizing better use of the state's natural resources with programs aimed at regaining profitability.

Opposite: Cucumbers, one of the potentially successful commercial vegetable crops, are harvested from the McKoin farm in Morehouse Parish. Below: Squash from the McCarty farm in the Morehouse area which is at the core of commercial vegetable operations. Above: Extension is participating in a pilot project to determine the feasibility of harvesting and marketing "Cajun Clams." Estimates hold that 24 to 48 billion clams may lie between the Sabine River and the Atchafalaya Basin in Louisiana.

"We wouldn't have made it this far in our commercial vegetable operation if we hadn't had the help of Extension," says Kelsie McKoin, a northeastern Louisiana farmer who is diversifying his operation to include more than the traditional cotton crop.

Likewise, a southern Louisiana fisherman, Malcolm Assevado, says he never would have attempted to begin a pilot project to study the feasibility of harvesting and marketing Louisiana "Cajun Clams" without the aid of Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service agents and specialists.

The efforts of McKoin and Assevado are just part of increased emphasis by Louisiana Extension on diversifying farm operations and better use of the state's natural resources. And that emphasis has led to

increases in commercial vegetable operations, aquaculture acreage, and projects designed to increase use of seafood products native to Louisiana.

Regaining Profitability

"We have to gear our programs so that we help in regaining profitability in agriculture and natural resources," explains Denver T. Loupe, vicechancellor of the Louisiana State University (LSU) Agricultural Center and director of the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service.

Loupe lists that as the major priority of Louisiana Extension during the coming years, and he says that goal is closely related to other priorities such as revitalization of rural Louisiana, increased production and utilization of aquatic foods, and the development and additional use of products of agriculture and natural resources.

Other officials in the state share the view that increased activity in the agricultural and seafood industries is the solution to Louisiana's economic woes.

State Budget Director Ralph Pearlman last summer congratulated those attending a Seafood Technology and Marketing Conference sponsored by Extension and the Louisiana Sea Grant College Program "on being part of an industry that can be the salvation of the state's economy."

Economic Force

LSU Agricultural Center Chancellor H. Rouse Caffey points out that Louisiana already is well on the way to making seafood a major economic force. The university is placing more emphasis on "value-added processing of renewable resources in aquaculture and fisheries," he

adds. "Louisiana already is first in seafood production...and Louisiana is first in aquaculture acres," says Caffey. "What we need to do now is increase the number of processing operations we have in Louisiana so we can ensure that the money generated by our aquaculture and marine development programs stays in the state."

The same principles apply to the benefits of commercial vegetable operations, according to Gerald Giesler, an agricultural economist who has taken leave from his Extension post to help organize a cooperative to process and market vegetables produced in northeastern Louisiana.

"This is an excellent idea for Louisiana; it's an idea whose time has come," Giesler says of increasing vegetable production. "And I think once we get these operations running more smoothly, people are going to stay with commercial vegetables because they can make \$300 to \$500 more an acre than they do with cotton."

"We're talking about an industry that could mean \$12 to \$15 million for this part of the state," he says, explaining that crops with the potential for great success include cucumbers, squash, cantalopes, and sweet corn.

Increased Acreage

Such attitudes have meant hundreds more acres—primarily in northeastern Louisiana—are devoted to commercial vegetables rather than cotton or soybeans, according to Extension specialists, who point out that farmers can produce several crops of vegetables on a piece of land during the year. Likewise, Extension personnel also say increased aquaculture acreage for crawfish and catfish serves dual purposes.

"Crawfish production is not just a matter of developing a new industry for the state," says Extension aquaculture specialist Larry de la Bretonne, adding that crawfish acreage in the state has increased from 2,000 in 1960 to 120,000 in 1986.

"Since crawfish can be included in an ongoing agricultural operation and handled just like any other crop, it means you are making better use of your resources because your operation is not sitting idle during the winter months."

Similarly, Louisiana's acreage devoted to catfish operations is increasing rapidly—with more than 4,700 acres in catfish ponds in 1986 and a "promising outlook" for further development.

Skilled Professionals Added

Increased efforts in vegetable and seafood production have led to the recent addition of more specialists and agents skilled in commercial vegetable and aquaculture operations to join the growing ranks of Louisiana personnel trained in those areas and others including seafood technology, marine resource economics, and vegetable marketing. And those efforts have caused a variety of Extension personnel to team up on projects aimed at increased utilization of such Louisiana products as alligator meat, crawfish, blue crabs, and "Cajun Clams."

What does that mean for the state? "It means we can move Louisiana into a position where it is the seafood basket of America, as well as remaining or becoming an important force in several other agricultural areas," according to Louisiana Director Loupe. ▲



Computer READI

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Today's rapid growth in computer technology brings an increased demand for computer literacy courses. But rural people often lack access to the kinds of continuing education and vocational programs that provide such training.

Now adults living in rural Idaho have the opportunity to learn more about computers through Extension's READI (Rural Education/Adult Development in Idaho) Project. During the last 2 years, over 600 people have signed up for READI computer classes in 14 locations statewide.

Learning Opportunities
Idaho developed the READI Project not only because of the demand for computer education in rural areas, but also because of the concern

that rural areas with no access to computer training would continue to be left behind in this age of new technology. The Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education provided funding to pilot the program.

Opportunities to learn about computers are important to both individuals and communities. Such opportunities are particularly important for those areas where traditional rural industries are no longer able to support large portions of the population.

Programs that foster development of computer-related skills among rural adults can be vital resources in these communities.

Economic development in these areas and the jobs they create are likely to encompass new technologies.

In addition, the computer-literate consumer is increasingly important to the smooth flow of business as more and more establishments add computerized customer services. For parents, the increased role of computers in their children's education encourages many adults to become computer-literate.

Finally, many rural adults seek educational opportunities in computers simply because of the fascination they have for new technology.

READI Courses

READI offers two classes for rural residents. Unit I of the

curriculum is a computer awareness class. Students learn the basics of using a computer including booting programs, using disk operating systems, and evaluating software. They also learn a little about programming and experimenting with a word processor.

In the Unit II course on computer applications, students learn to use a spreadsheet and data base, and how to improve their word processing skills. Classes may include a telecommunications demonstration.

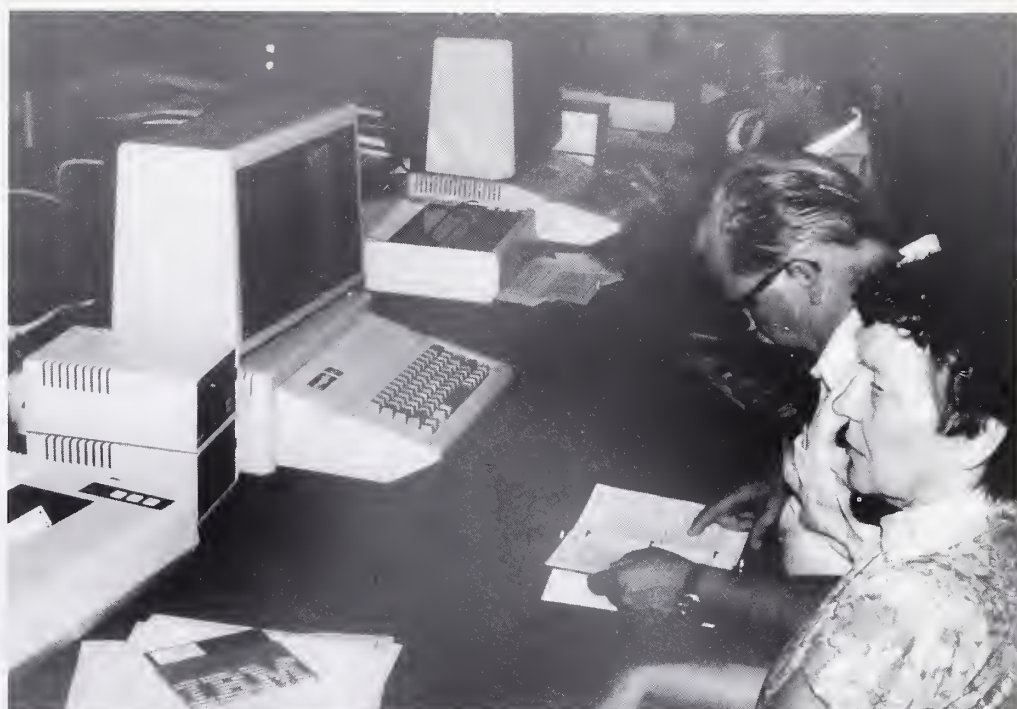
Students learn to use the computer as a problemsolving tool while working on such tasks as developing a family budget, keeping a check register, or designing a mailing list.

Working in small groups, students apply computer applications to a specific problem scenario such as developing a community center, organizing a users' group, doing their book-keeping with a computer, or planning a family reunion.

Teachers for the classes are local instructors who have received training in teaching rural adults about computers at the annual READI Summer Institute. Each class is organized by a county advisory committee who takes the generic state program and translates it into an effective local offering.

Benefits To Participants

People participate in READI for a variety of reasons. About one-third of participants take the course to improve their job skills. Another one-third participate in READI because they want to computerize their small business, ranch, or farm. A final third are interested in learning to understand computer jargon so they can communicate more effectively with their children. The majority of participants are women.



One assumption made early in the project is that a successful experience with READI encourages learners to go on to other educational activities.

READI graduates use their new skills in a variety of ways. In a survey taken 8 weeks after the initial classes finished, 57 percent of participants reported they were currently using their computer skills to evaluate and purchase hardware and software, apply new skills to the workplace, or more efficiently manage a farm or ranch. One year later the original group of READI graduates reported that, as a result of the course, they had:

	Percent
Changed jobs	9
Entered the labor market	9
Taken another class	22
Bought a computer	9
Other (got a raise, etc.)	19
No response	31
(Percents may not add up to 100 due to rounding)	

Benefits To Communities

When Extension staff started the computer project, they assumed communities with no postsecondary educational programs would be interested in expanding their offerings beyond READI. Several of the counties where READI operated now offer continuing education courses. Several others have expanded their community education programs. In two counties, the READI program sponsored a community computer expo with large turnouts of local residents. Involvement in READI has also spurred community efforts in economic development in several locations.

To learn more about the READI Project, write to the District 1 Cooperative Extension Office, Ag Science III, University of Idaho, Moscow, ID 83843. Manuals for instructors, participant guides, and a starter kit for Extension agents interested in developing a READI Project are available. ▲

*Opposite and Above:
Approximately 600 rural
residents of Idaho have
attended Extension's READI
(Rural Education/Adult
Development in Idaho)
Project in 14 locations in the
state in the last 2 years. This
course in computer literacy
ensures that rural residents
who lack access to such
training will not be left
behind in this high-tech age.
Computer-related skills can
be vital resources in these
communities.*

Rural Teens Accentuate The Postive

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4-H Information
Coordinator
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University, East
Lansing

Friends, school work, sports, skin problems—these are the issues of highest concern to rural teenagers nowadays, right?

Wrong.

Try bankruptcy, loans, careers, making money, and death.

Surprised? So was the 4-H staff in Gratiot County, Michigan, who surveyed local teenagers to find out what causes stress in their lives.

“Their responses showed us that these teens were dealing with adult problems and issues along with those normally associated with kids their age,” says Nicholie Hoffman, Michigan State University Extension specialist and former Gratiot County 4-H youth agent. “We were concerned that they might not be equipped to handle their feelings.”

Staying Positive

The teenagers are 4-H and Future Farmers of America members who belong to a Cooperative Extension Service-sponsored group called “Positive Teens for Gratiot County.” And though the name sounds out of sync with their current frame of mind, these teens are trying to stay positive as they and their families face the most severe farm crisis in the history of their community.

Gratiot County farmers have been beset with the same challenges as farmers all over the country—dropping land values, high interest rates, and falling prices for crops.

But no one could have been prepared to deal with what happened in Gratiot and many other Michigan counties this fall.

For 26 consecutive days in September the sun did not shine. For 26 days rain fell on ripening fields, devastating what could have been bumper crops for many farmers—washing away hopes that this harvest could help bail them out of already tight financial binds.

“This is the worst the farm situation has ever been, and no one will argue that,” says Corey Roslund, Gratiot County 4-H youth agent. “CES, in cooperation with other agencies, has been providing excellent support and information to farmers to help deal with the crisis. But we wanted to make sure that the young people’s feelings and fears were not overlooked.”

Support Group Helps

“Positive Teens for Gratiot County” brings together students from all the area high schools, to share feelings and provide support for one another. “It’s very scary not knowing how the farm year’s going to turn out,” says 15-year-old Carrie Stoneman of Breckenridge. “It’s scary not knowing if we’re going to be able to continue farming or if we’ll lose our land. It’s awfully risky.”

The teen years are difficult enough with the pressures of peers, homework, and body changes. But teenagers in farming communities have the added pressures of hard work, long hours, and worry over the viability of their family businesses.

“These kids care very deeply about their parents and about their family farms,” says Hoffman. “They have a strong need to feel like they’re doing something—helping in some way—and that’s what ‘Positive Teens’ is all about.”

“The group started about 2 years ago as an activist group that wanted to make a difference,” says 4-H agent Roslund. “But their focus has changed a bit lately.”

What started as a group of about 70 teenagers involved in a variety of community service and social activities evolved into a close-knit support group of teens who draw on each other’s strengths to get them through the toughest of times.

After only a couple of support group meetings, which included sessions on stress management and coping skills, it was clear that the teens shared similar concerns and feelings. They were scared. They were angry. They felt guilty, helpless, and hopeless.

“But just talking about it with people who understand really helps,” says 17-year-old Scott DeVuyst. He is a senior at Ithaca High School, works part time at a farm equipment store, and helps his father farm 500 acres of cash crops. “It helps to know that you’re not alone—that some of your friends also feel guilty and somehow responsible that their dads aren’t doing so good,” DeVuyst says.

Communicating Via Video

The guilt issue is intensified for many of the teenagers because they are so concerned about their parents and the pressures on them that they don’t want to burden them with their own concerns. But “Positive Teens for Gratiot County” came up with a positive solution to that problem.



"Positive Teens for Gratiot County," an Extension Service-sponsored group in Michigan, whose members are 4-H'ers and Future Farmers of America, share feelings and provide support for one another during a period of severe farm crisis in their community. 4-H'ers Carrie Stoneman and Scott DeVuyst attend a videotaping of one of their support sessions that will be shown to their parents to encourage better communication between them.

"The kids asked if we could arrange to videotape one of our support sessions," Hoffman says. "They wanted to show the videotape to their parents in hopes that it would help ease open the doors of communication."

A local cable company was hired to videotape an hour-long session of the group; the teens had the option of showing the tape to their parents.


"I'd like Dad to see how this group operates," says Scott DeVuyst. "I'd like him to know how much it has helped me and maybe encourage him to attend adult support groups similar to this."

"Don't give up," is the message Carrie Stoneman wants to convey to her parents. "Sure, this is a bad time right now and it may get worse," she says into the camera. "But I'd rather see you hang onto something that you both love doing."

Communicating their feelings won't solve the serious problems and issues facing farmers and their families. For some, the flood of 1986 will be remembered as the last straw—the final blow that forced them to concede to economic strains, ending generations of tradition, forcing radical changes in lifestyles, and dousing dreams of the future.

But these teenagers believe that isolating oneself and holding in all those feelings can intensify a bad situation, making the problem seem worse and increasing the chance of serious physical and mental health problems.

Positive Changes

"I've seen so many positive changes in these teenagers since we started the support group," says Sharon Fenton, Gratiot County program assistant in charge of teen programming. "Their confidence has increased, they feel better about the whole situation, they seem to have a much better attitude about school, they're exploring all their options, and, overall, they are approaching the future in a very positive way." 

Home Is Where The Business Is

26 *Extension Review*



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Three Alabama Extension programs for home-based businesses—Food For Profit, Sew For Pay, and CASH Creative Artisans Succeeding At Home—are as effective today helping people find alternative income sources as when they were begun.

“The Food For Profit Program was initiated in 1982 with nine area meetings,” says Oleane Carden Zenoble, Extension foods specialist at Auburn University, who developed the series for people interested in starting small food businesses. “About 750 people attended the area meetings, but requests for information came in long after they were ended. We’ve sent out more than 1,500 information packets.

The Food For Profit series covered how to decide whether to start a business, how to price and related topics, health department regulations, state business license laws, and food safety. “A number of those who attended have successfully started small food businesses,” Zenoble says.

“But those who received our information and decided not to start a business were also helped. They did not waste money in an unsuccessful attempt.”

Crafts For CASH

In 1983, Georgia Aycock, Extension home furnishings specialist, and Evelyn Brannon, Extension clothing specialist, both of Auburn University, developed the CASH Program. CASH was aimed at people who made crafts and handmade items or who offered a service.

“On my travels around the state, I saw many people who had handmade items, but who didn’t know how to market them,” Aycock explains.

Aycock and Brannon conducted a pilot program in three counties, developed a set of materials, and held 10 area meetings attended by 1,500 people. Topics included: types of business, whether to start a business, insurance, zoning laws, advertising, copyright laws, resources, taxes, pricing, and marketing.

New York Study Tour

In 1985, Aycock and Lenda Jo Anderson, an Extension clothing specialist at Auburn, took 15 home-based business people to New York City on a study tour. The group met with professionals in various specialties such as marketing. The Alabamians showed samples of their products which were evaluated by the professionals.

The CASH II Program was developed for those who needed additional information for their home-based businesses. CASH II, a joint effort involving both the home economics and community resource development groups, covered such subjects as financing, cash flow plans, insurance, pricing, and marketing.

In the spring of 1987, Aycock and Zenoble plan a third home-based business program for people who wish to establish bed-and-breakfast businesses. “We found a need in many areas of the state for overnight accommodations,” Aycock points out. “This type of home business could offer an alternative income for a number of people...farmers, retirees, or the unemployed.”

Sew For Pay

Extension’s Sew For Pay Program stressed such areas as pricing, skill development, resources, and organization of time, space, and sewing processes. In 1983 and 1984 nearly 1,000 Alabamians attended five county and 16 Sew For Pay

area meetings. Extension has filled over 500 out-of-state requests for information about the program. Today, more than 1,500 people receive the monthly Extension newsletter "Sew For Pay."

Joanna Johnson of Wilcox County is grateful she attended Sew For Pay meetings. "I started out with a sewing hobby that grew into a business," Johnson says. "After a Sew For Pay meeting, I discussed my business questions with Evelyn Brannon and Lenda Jo Anderson. They suggested I hire a sales representative for my growing business and I'm glad I took their advice. Now, I have four sales representatives, three full-time employees, and two smocking crews."

Johnson no longer works out of her home. She designs and produces children's clothes that are sold throughout the Southeast and in parts of the Southwest.

Mall Jubilee

There have been other successful local efforts that have helped Alabamians find alternative incomes. Myra Barton, Extension agent in Mobile County, started a "Homemakers Jubilee" at a local shopping mall that is now a twice-yearly event.

"In 1984, crafters at the Jubilee sold \$30,000 worth of goods in 2 days," says Barton. "As a result of the Jubilee, about 25 people have opened commercial shops."

Volunteer leaders, under Barton's leadership, formed a group called Homemakers. With their help, the crafters are now staging the mall Jubilee themselves twice a year.

Apparel Sourcing Fair

In February 1986, Alabama Extension, Auburn University, and cooperating state agencies held the Nation's first Apparel Sourcing Fair which brought together state manufacturers and retailers. The textile and apparel industries in the state have suffered economically; since 1979, 20 textile and apparel plants in the state have closed, idling more than 10,000 workers.

"More than 75 apparel manufacturers and contractors from Alabama and surrounding states met with major retailers and buying companies such as Sears Roebuck & Company and Mast Industries," Anderson comments. "The fair was a great success—it led to contracts for some Alabama manufacturers. The apparel industry is the state's largest industry with more than 50,000 persons employed. But the small apparel



contractors, located primarily in rural areas, cannot compete with the imports. That's why we are so concerned with trying to increase jobs in this industry."

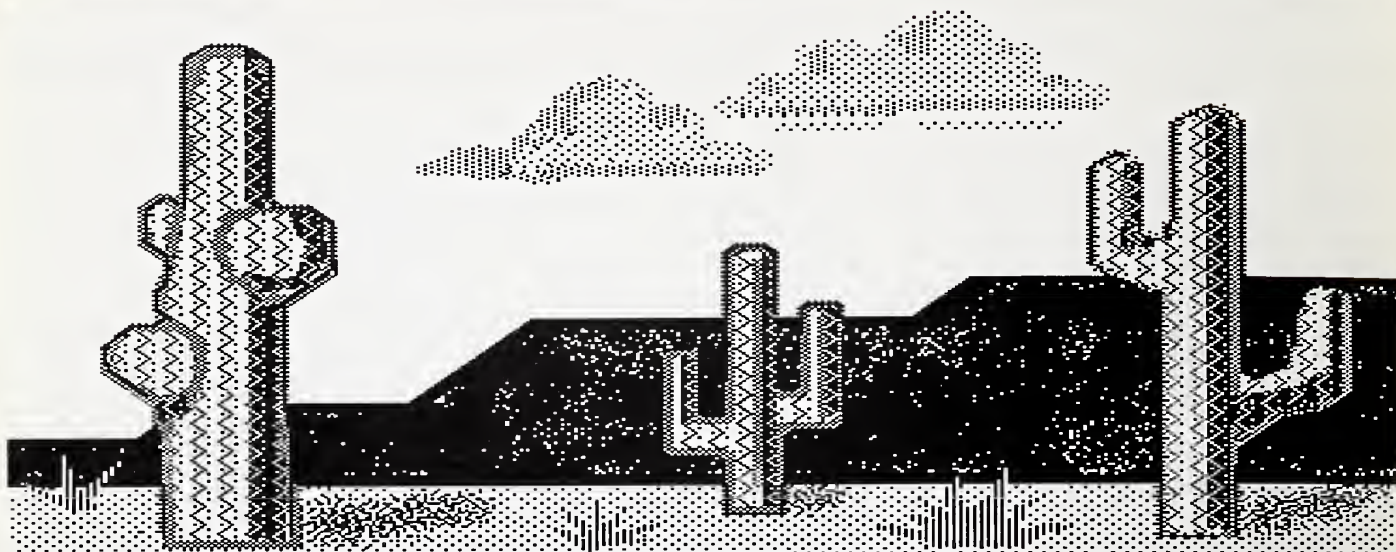
Extension, in cooperation with state agencies, is planning a series of Job Sourcing Fairs later this year. Warren McCord, state leader for community resource development at Auburn University, explains that the fairs will be targeted for farm family members and held in locations where the farm crisis is hitting hardest.

"The job fairs will bring together agencies and organizations to help farmers and their families discuss career decisions and receive aptitude counseling, testing, placement, and assessment of business opportunities in one central location," McCord points out. ▲

Opposite: This spring Alabama Extension will offer home-based business programs for people interested in establishing bed-and-breakfast inns. Debbie Whitley (left) discusses business problems she's encountered while running her successful bed-and-breakfast inn with Oleane Zenoble, Extension foods specialist at Auburn University. Above: Crafts are popular home-based businesses in Alabama. Jan Jones (right) of Auburn displays sculptures she's made (from paper towels in a process similar to paper mache) to Georgia Aycock, Extension home furnishings specialist, Auburn University.

Building On Resources In Arizona

28 *Extension Review*



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Because of rising irrigation costs, two-thirds of irrigated farmland planted with corn and cotton in Cochise County, Arizona, has been abandoned.

The economy of Willcox, Arizona, was severely affected by this development. How does a community counter such a loss to the local economy?

With the help of Extension, business leaders met to assess the community's resources and opportunities for job development. The leaders were aware that new businesses would be attracted to the area only if it could be demonstrated there would be economic advantages.

After expressing interest in attracting a small industrial firm, business leaders realized that the community's "comparative advantage" was not in manufacturing but rather in its agricultural resources and climate. Willcox had locational advantages as well for tourism and highway (Interstate 10) service.

Target: New Enterprises

The business leaders targeted several enterprises for further exploration: fruit and nut production, dairy, ethanol production, trade area, and highway service. As a basis for promotional efforts, they undertook a feasibility study to

document the economic advantages of targeted enterprises.

When they reviewed the dairy industry they noted that most of the state's dairies are presently clustered in the metropolitan Phoenix area. The dairies there are under increasing land pressures.

Otis Lough, Extension dairy specialist, University of Arizona (retired), made an economic assessment of the dairy situation which revealed that Willcox's cooler climate would substantially reduce summer heat stress on cattle. These reduced cooling costs could increase both milk yield and reproductive efficiency \$500 to \$550 per cow. The assessment noted other advantages for dairy owners in Cochise County: lower land prices, abundant dairy feedstuffs (including the state's highest quality alfalfa), availability of local farm labor, location of the largest livestock auction in the state, and surfaced farm-to-town roads.

Profile For Dairies

Recently, business leaders distributed a community profile to all dairies and related businesses in the state.


As a result, the Willcox Chamber of Commerce And Agriculture has organized a "sales team" to work with prospective dairy firms. Currently, several dairies are now contemplating a move to the area.

Analysis—Not Wishful Thinking

When it comes to targeting of prospects Willcox has replaced wishful thinking with economic analysis. This was accomplished by researching specific opportunities and developing community profiles aimed at targeted enterprises.

The results have been encouraging. Willcox is showing signs of being a state leader in apple production; over 5,000 acres of apples have been planted. Two packing plants are currently operating with a large cold storage plant under construction.

Because of the area's unique climate, the Willcox apple has a 4 to 6 percent higher sugar content than apples produced in other U.S. locations, a real "comparative advantage."

To meet trade area and highway and service needs, a new shopping complex is being constructed. In many ways, Willcox is using the tools of economic analysis to build on its agricultural resources. 

Missouri Finds Alternatives

Extension Review 29



For the past year, a small group of Extension and research faculty, and administrators in several colleges at the University of Missouri, have been exploring innovative ideas that can be developed and applied to help the economic conditions of people living in rural areas. To date, the Alternatives Program, whose approach has been broad-based and multidisciplinary, has resulted in the distribution of two different types of "catalogs" while three other projects have made considerable progress.

Extension at the University of Missouri provided "seed money" for a craft catalog, *Best of Missouri's Hands*, that has attracted widespread interest and support for other parts of

the program. Extension personnel at both the state and local levels took active leadership roles in developing this publication.

The Catalog of Ideas is a software collection of innovative ideas dealing with the "internal" development of communities that is being distributed through county Extension offices on two IBM-PC floppy diskettes. Community development specialists are making considerable use of the processes and programs developed as part of the catalog.

Agricultural Alternatives
The Agricultural Alternatives Project now underway has

three sub-projects: the search for new crops for Missouri farmers; the development of methods of reducing the length of grain feeding of forage-based beef; and the establishment of new ways of conducting research on alfalfa.

Commercial horticultural crops have not been extensive in Missouri. The project dealing with fresh fruits and vegetables emphasizes both their production and marketing. New and innovative methods must be developed for this entire process.

The Missouri Product Finder, last of the three projects currently underway, is a computer-based easy-to-update data collection of all the sources, products, processes, and by-products of industrial firms in the state.

Current industrial registers are often out of date, incomplete, and difficult to use. It is hoped that by enhancing the use of Missouri industrial products jobs will be created. Extension specialists have been cooperating with local participants to foster this project: bankers, industrialists, members of Chambers of Commerce, and business leaders.

The Alternatives Program is adding new projects and transforming old ones. For example, a project has been initiated to help "lease" hunting in the state. Another project being considered is the development and distribution of a direct marketing catalog of Missouri processed farm products, *The Best of Missouri Farms*. A proposed horticultural project aims at establishing producer cooperatives that will direct market to local bulk food buyers such as hospitals and schools.

Missouri Extension has already adopted many of the conceptual elements of these Alternatives Programs while they move toward institutionalization and permanent funding. ▲

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Recreating History In West Virginia

30 Extension Review



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Extension Program
Development
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and

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For more than 60 years, one dream of West Virginia devotees of Civil War General Thomas (Stonewall) Jackson eluded them: to rebuild the homestead and mill that nurtured Jackson. Now, because of a statewide volunteer effort involving the West Virginia Extension Homemakers Council, 4-H members, and faculty at West Virginia University, the dream of rebuilding "Historic Jackson's Mill" is becoming a reality.

The mill is a part of the nationally famous 523-acre Jackson's Mill State 4-H Camp. Many Extension events are held at the site and more than 100,000 visitors use the camping and conference facilities annually.

A former West Virginia 4-H'er and his wife donated a 200-year-old working gristmill—Blaker's Mill—to the Jackson's Mill project. Despite this generosity, there were major problems to be solved: Blaker's Mill was three stories tall and 150 miles from the Jackson's Mill site.

Relocation Plan

Determined volunteers and Extension West Virginia University faculty worked with architects and state officials and received approval for a plan to relocate Blaker's Mill. The plans first steps called for disassembling Blaker's Mill, moving it to the Jackson's Mill State 4-H Camp, then rebuilding the structure, digging a mill pond, and constructing a sawmill.

"The original camp was constructed through the efforts and dollars of volunteers," Dan Tabler, director of Jackson's Mill says. "So we knew if enough volunteer labor could be recruited, we could reduce an estimated three-fourths of the reconstruction costs. Our reconstruction committee began organizing a voluntary recruitment plan and began looking for monetary donations."

In 1984, Tabler asked the West Virginia Extension Homemakers Council, Inc., for fund-raising ideas to get the gristmill project underway.

Cookbook Fundraiser

The Council suggested a cookbook that would contain the favorite recipes of West Virginia Extension homemakers, 4-H'ers, and friends. A committee collected more than 1,500 recipes and selected nearly 400 recipes for print.

The cookbook, *The Flavors of Jackson's Mill*, attracted the interest of Extension supporters throughout the state. To date, the homemakers council has contributed more than \$50,000 to the gristmill project, with \$40,000 of that total derived from cookbook sales.



In April 1985, during the annual Self-Enrichment Conference cosponsored by West Virginia University Extension and the West Virginia Extension Homemakers Council, groundbreaking ceremonies signaled site preparation for the relocation of Blaker's Mill. The conference ceremonies honored Extension homemaker's contributions to the project.

A few weeks after this conference volunteers began dismantling Blaker's Mill for shipment via donated vehicles to Jackson's Mill.

On August 30, 1985, Historic Jackson's Mill was dedicated. Homemakers marched in their traditional "Parade of Banners" and each of West Virginia's 55 counties was represented in the dedication ceremonies. The homemaker's role in the historic project was explained by the Extension Homemaker's state president.

Governor Arch A. Moore delivered the dedication speech and praised the West Virginia volunteer spirit and thanked the volunteers for "this priceless gift."

The restoration project is now 90 percent complete. Tabler estimates that more than 50 volunteers have donated in excess of 2,500 hours in labor.

"By spring 1987," Tabler says, "this mill should be fully operative. Volunteers will be able to use stone-ground cornmeal prepared at a mill they helped reconstruct." ▲

Top Right: Blaker's Mill, donated by a former 4-H'er, as it appeared before volunteers disassembled and moved it 150 miles to the nationally famous Jackson's Mill State 4-H Camp. Top Left: A volunteer matches prepared lumber while reconstructing the mill. Above: Blaker's Mill after being reassembled, roofed, shingled, and relocated.

Rural Resurgence: Mandate For Community Leadership

Extension Review 31

Extension Community Leadership Development (CLD) programs are categorized into three phases of CLD programming: 1. Past (skills and procedures); 2. Present (intensive training); and 3. Future (functional issues management). The acknowledged strengths of CLD programs are the descriptive terminologies used to understand leadership capacity and explain group maintenance functions. There is a good knowledge base and a sound record for gleaning information about basic leadership and organizational "skills and procedures."

Without this knowledge, there would not be the necessary base to serve the needs of a rural resurgence. As beneficial as it is to share leadership and organizational information, CLD programming must move to apply this knowledge.

CLD Intensive Training

Examples of current intensive CLD training are the popular Agriculture And Rural Leaders, and the Family Community Leadership (FCL) "Kellogg-type" programs. These intensive CLD programs vary, but are characterized by an approach that integrates knowledge about leadership and organizations (Skills And Procedures) with applied and extended experiential learning applications.

These intensive and extended training programs for selected community leaders frequently include heavy emphasis on—

- Public decisionmaking within the broader context of public policy determination;
- Interorganizational resource sharing, both public and private, and intergovernmental applications;

- Community awareness, ranging from local to international, with a strong focus on cross-cultural experiences and awareness of the needs of the economically disadvantaged;

- Local economic conditions and their relation to a global economy;

- Extended and applied learning experiences outside the immediate instructional environment; and

- Expectation that a substantial community project or experience will be conducted—sometimes as part of a learning contract.

Some have characterized this type of CLD training of community leaders as "elitism." However, by carefully selecting representative audiences and engaging in training that broadens the leaders socio-economic perspectives, CLD training can be an important resource in a rural resurgence.

Functional Role

In the future, community leaders will be faced with the task of managing public involvement in complex and fast-moving community issues. The success factor of the eight priorities identified by the Extension System is dependent upon the public decisionmaking process, and on CLD programming for "Functional Issue(s) Management," not leadership development purely for the sake of leadership development. CLD must program for more than leadership skills and organizational maintenance. CLD has a functional role to play in all the Extension priorities.

Challenges


When thinking in a futuristic context it is necessary to envision a different tomorrow where one meets challenges and opportunities with innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurial skills. For rural

resurgence, the challenge is to assist community leaders to deal with turbulent local conditions. Command over local conditions no longer guarantees success. The locus of decisionmaking has shifted outside the community and external forces have dramatically reduced local control. Institutions are being restructured—especially the agricultural and rural economic base.

Contemporary historians suggest that western democracies (especially local governments) are experiencing a dramatic historical transition comparable to two other traumatic periods. One period was the creation of the first unitary nation-state in seventeenth century France. The other period was the creation of the first federal nation-state by the American Revolution of 1776.

A technical, complex, and fast-moving society will call upon the best use of information for community decisionmaking. This development raises critical questions. Will local leaders be able to integrate information, understand issues and decisions external to their immediate setting? Will community leaders be effective in dealing with the demands of a rural resurgence?

The future requires an emphasis on thoughtful public decision-making procedures, rather than "quick fix" technical solutions. CLD, in cooperation with other interested partners, can provide an important resource. It must be involved in all Extension programming: agriculture, natural resources, family nutrition and health, and youth. There is a need for each to reach out and interface with a larger community through its own internal leadership.

Adapted from a presentation to the ES/USDA and ECOP/CRD-PA, at the Community Leadership Development Conference at Fort Mitchell, Kentucky, on September 9, 1986. 

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The Georgia Experience: Public Policy Education

32 Extension Review

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During the period 1980-85 Georgia's population increased by 9.4 percent, a rate that made Georgia the 10th fastest growing state in the Nation. However, during that same time frame, 33 of the 159 counties in the state lost population. The counties that suffered this out-migration have remarkably similar characteristics: their economic structures tend to be dependent upon either timber, agriculture, or mining.

Population loss has been occurring in these counties since the mechanization of agriculture in the late 1930s. Five decades of out-migration and limited economic opportunities pose significant problems for Georgia's rural revitalization efforts.

Georgia: 2000

To change the long-term social and economic conditions that affect these communities, Georgia Extension implemented a program that focused on identifying issues and creating solutions to solve local problems. This approach was based upon several previously developed program thrusts that have broad applications on a statewide-basis and have been specifically targeted to rural areas.

The "Georgia: 2000" project, developed to educate citizens about public policy issues, and coordinated by Extension professionals, focused on long-range issues facing the state and was highlighted by a public debate.

Over an 18-month period, leaders from state and local government, agriculture and agribusiness, industry and education met, developed an agenda, and analyzed the major challenges facing the state. Their recommendations were presented to the governor, the state legislature, and, through numerous media presentations, shared with the people of Georgia.

County: 2000

Georgia Extension professionals, recognizing that meaningful problem-solving occurs at the local level, have initiated the "Georgia: 2000" project on a county level. The new project, "County: 2000," brings local decisionmakers together for public policy discussions sponsored by the local Extension office. All county Extension offices and selected state specialists are currently involved in some manner with "County: 2000" projects.

Identifying Community Issues

The Socioeconomic Perspectives Program, a key program developed by Georgia Extension, is helping decisionmakers identify community issues. Before any discussions can take place on public policy, Extension specialists believe that leaders must have access to current data and information in a usable form. Using various computer technologies, Extension specialists

compile pertinent census information and other county level data into a format designed for local public policy discussion.


A three-member team of Extension specialists uses a panel discussion format to highlight such topics as agriculture, health, local industry trends, education issues, and chamber of commerce concerns. The panel relates these topics to information on population growth and change, income distribution, transfer payments, farm income and expenses, employment, retail sales, and housing.

Extension specialists, in three-member teams, represent areas of particular concern in their various target counties. For example, a forestry specialist may be involved in a county dependent on the wood products industry, or a home economist whose expertise is human development or family issues may be included on another team. Resource development specialists coordinate the program and serve on all county teams to cover such issues as population growth, income distribution, and community development. The team, working with the local Extension agent, prepares the report, discusses the data with local leaders, and presents the recommendations in a public meeting. The Extension agent publicizes the presentation, invites key community leaders, and initiates plans to develop the recommendations into concrete decisions.

Emphasis: Local Implications

After the data has been presented at the public meeting, the local Extension agent and Extension specialists assigned to the "County: 2000" program meet with community leaders. Together, they develop strategies based on the data and the community's needs. Extension staff members incorporate new issues related to their program planning into their plans of work.

For many counties, this follow-up meeting provides the basis for the formation of a "County: 2000" committee that will, with Extension's assistance, formulate plans and carry through with the recommendations.

Many believe that rural revitalization in Georgia can take place through efforts similar to the ones Georgia Extension is developing. Real advantages are offered by combining a "Georgia: 2000" concept with county Socioeconomic Perspectives. There are also some risks--all individuals and agencies are not always ready to confront the "hard facts" after issues and concerns in a community have been identified. But there are risks worth taking. Georgia Extension, through its involvement in public policy education, is aiming at development of innovative and usable programs for economic development successes in the state's rural and urban counties. 

GEORGIA 2000
COUNTY 2000

New Mexico Community Shapes Its Future

Extension Review 33

Raton, New Mexico, lies in the northeast corner of the state. Tourists and miners form the economic base of this historic frontier town of 8,000, previously a major stop on the Santa Fe Trail.

Several years ago, Raton's largest employer, a coal mine, began a period of shutdowns and re-openings which raised concerns of local leaders.

The Chamber of Commerce contacted New Mexico Extension. Since then, with Extension's assistance, the town has taken positive steps to improve its economic future.

Educational Workshops

First, Raton business leaders, community officials, and residents participated in Extension economic development workshops aimed at finding ways to increase job opportunities in the community. Extension Business and Economic Development Specialist Robert Coppedge conducted the sessions.

In February 1984, a community team from Raton participated in the first of three "Hard Times: Communities in Transition" workshops in Farmington, New Mexico. The team included county Extension Home Economist Mary Ellen Martinez, headquartered in Raton.

Western community development specialists designed the regional workshops as an educational approach to help communities deal with economic stress. The Western Rural Development Center provided the necessary funds.

Main Street Designation

Shortly after the workshops, Raton businesswoman and Chamber of Commerce President Sue Fleming heard of the September 1984 national video conference on the National Main Street Network, a program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

The Network serves towns and cities with populations under 50,000. Designed to encourage economic development within the context of historic preservation, the program helps members plan for the downtown's future by building on its past.

Extension Specialist Coppedge arranged for a local viewing of the conference and later conducted several seminars in Raton on features of the program. He then assisted the community in preparing its application to become a Main Street community. Fleming, who was instrumental in getting the community involved in Extension educational programs, now serves as the Raton Main Street director.



Small Business Workshops

While Raton pursued Main Street designation, a western group of Extension specialists and researchers focused attention on the needs of small businesses. Raton became the site of the first of four pilot workshops. A steering committee of Raton business and community leaders and Extension specialists and researchers throughout the West cooperated in developing the "Small Business Education Workshop: Survival Techniques." A Western Rural Development Center grant provided funds.


Along with Extension and research faculty at land-grant universities in the West, representatives from the private sector, Small Business Administration, and the Service Core of Retired Executives (SCORE) conducted the workshop sessions.

Positive Evaluation

"From the turnout," reports the *Raton Range* newspaper the day after the last session there, "the workshop has truly been a success...Raton received a challenge to excel in small business, the backbone of any rural economy."

A follow-up evaluation completed by 88 percent of Raton workshop participants a year later shows that about 70 percent thinks the workshop contributed to the improvement of their business skills to a fair or great extent. All 11 business practices recommended in the sessions were implemented to some degree by some of the participants.

Recently Raton community and business leaders met for a 3-day strategic planning workshop. Their top concern—economic development. One objective adopted by the group is to request additional workshops and assistance from Extension in the areas of small business education and economic development.

Through the persistent nature and hard work of its community members, Raton is shaping a positive future. Extension is proud to be a part of the action. 

Robert O. Coppedge
Extension Business and Economic Development Specialist
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Las Cruces

Main street of Raton, New Mexico. After the town's largest employer, a coal mine, suffered closings, community leaders, with Extension assistance, began a series of workshops focusing on helping small businesses. Positive steps are now underway to improve Raton's economic future.

Rural Community Development In The 1990s

34 Extension Review

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and
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The rapid changes in American society make it difficult to discern the specific issues facing rural communities in the nineties. However, several emerging forces and trends are suggestive of the environment communities will face. This article focuses on some of the major societal forces and some specific issues that rural leaders and policymakers will need to act on in the next several years.

Increased Diversity

Projections about the future of rural communities are difficult because of the heterogeneity among them. This diversity is likely to increase as communities attempt to become more specialized. Many communities are seeking development strategies that will make them unique within their state or region.

For example, the "all-purpose" community is giving way to communities that focus on retirement, recreation, retail trade centers, and health care. Other communities, because of historical factors or special geographic or cultural characteristics are attempting to achieve a more diverse economic base. In the Midwest, for example, many agriculturally dependent communities hard-hit by the farm crisis are trying to attract non-agricultural industries. Thus, while some communities are trying to establish a unique niche by providing specialized services or industries, other communities are attempting to diversify their economic base.

Specialization and diversification will bring further heterogeneity among rural communities. Increasingly, it will be necessary to identify the specific needs of different types of communities.

Less Federal Assistance

The federal outlay for rural community development has been reduced. More reductions proposed in community block grants, revenue sharing, and other development programs suggest that local development officials will have to rely upon sources other than federal dollars. Communities that rely heavily upon agriculture will not be able to absorb the reduced federal funding for infrastructure and business development. This problem will likely become acute in agriculturally based state economies. Local developers will increasingly rely upon locally generated resources. In addition, there will be more competition for the limited federal monies.

International-Global Economy

Just as agriculture has had to adjust to international forces in the market place, rural communities must also become attuned to these global forces. Increasingly, monetary and fiscal policy as reflected in international exchange rates will determine employment opportunities in rural industries. One only need note in the

textile industry, the relationship between international trade policy and employment in the U.S. textile mills.

Similarly, the current world glut of feed grains has negatively affected farming-dependent communities. Rural community leaders need to understand how global-international issues and policy decisions influence the economy of their community.

Rural Industrialization

Historically, attracting new industry to rural areas was the major development strategy for many communities. Now it will often be multinational conglomerates that will be building new plants. The increase in corporate mergers suggests that rural communities will have to become much more sophisticated in attracting these kinds of firms. The competition for attracting new business and industries is increasing. Often, adjoining states or communities have competed against each other to attract new industry.

Multinational conglomerates may have little regard for political boundaries nor express much community or national loyalty in selecting where they will build their plants. Often, small, relatively poor and disadvantaged rural communities grant major concessions to prospective new businesses and industries that are among the wealthiest corporations. Some of the fastest-growing rural communities are experiencing such growth because foreign-owned industries are locating in this country to avoid trade restrictions. If trade policies shift, these communities might find themselves in quite different circumstances.

The imbalance of power between large corporations and small communities suggests that local development efforts should emphasize retention and expansion of existing businesses. Fostering a supportive environment for home-grown businesses may provide more long-term benefits to the local communities. The bottom line of rural industrialization should be the net increase in the number of jobs, not the changes in job numbers that result when employment shifts from one community to another.

Population Dynamics

Rural communities must account for population changes in planning. The composition of local residents by age, income level, education, and skills must be determined for a community to assess the needs of local residents as well as promote that community in development activities. The mix of services needed by the community is dependent on characteristics of the population. A significant problem for communities is how to adjust long-term capital investments in infrastructure (public utilities, schools, housing) to rapid population changes—

particularly with population decline. Predicting future demand for services precisely may prevent communities from investing in costly facilities which will not be needed in a few years.

Impacts of Social Change

- Community leadership is a critical dimension of rural community viability. Leaders must become adept at obtaining development assistance. In addition, they must be attuned to national and international forces that infringe upon their communities. The internationalization of the U.S. economy has linked community viability to world events. Just as farmers must adjust to world agricultural production, rural communities, as they become more dependent on national and international industrial, financial, and commercial markets, will likely find that events beyond the city limits hold major consequences for their well-being. Several leadership education programs can help local people assume leadership roles that can make a difference in community development efforts. These programs will become more important as local leaders attempt to deal with the uncertainties of the global economy.

- The declining amount of federal aid for rural community development will require local leaders to become more efficient than before at generating local resources. The success at raising local dollars will depend on residents having a vision of their community and a commitment to its future. Some communities have become complacent and dependent upon federal dollars to develop their community. Developing a vision requires that communities establish goals and priorities and build a sense of esprit de corps to achieve them.

- Future community development efforts will likely require intercommunity cooperation. In providing such services as health care, education, and public utilities, local communities may find cooperation is beneficial, if not essential. A group of communities may be more effective than a single town in recruiting new industry, by forming an area or regional economic development commission. Inter-community as well as intra-community cooperation is expected to become more important. Networks within as well as between communities need to be fostered

- Population retention and growth are a function of the availability of jobs and the community's quality of life offered. Rural communities will have to address how to provide meaningful employment opportunities as well as maintain a desirable quality of life. Obviously, difficult decisions exist when new industry may bring new problems along with jobs (for example, need for public services and utilities, environmental costs, traffic congestion, and so on). Communities must recognize the problems of growth versus maintaining the quality of life.

- It is important to integrate development activities into a comprehensive approach. One is struck by the number of development activities in which many local communities and agencies are involved. For example, community, rural, agriculture, human, small business, economic, family, and mainstreet development are all part of what might be called integrated rural development. Questions can be raised as to how these programs are linked together. With resources scarce, it is likely that these diverse activities need to be integrated and coordinated.

- Communities need to remember that their strength is only as great as the sense of community spirit that is shared among residents. Creating civic pride and community spirit are essential to community viability. Three key ingredients are: (a) open communication to foster a sense of community, (b) cooperation in local development activities, and (c) commitment to community-established goals and priorities.

- Rural communities must address the need for economic diversification, in light of the roller coaster of economic booms and busts that have threatened the viability of many communities. While some communities are becoming more specialized than before, they need to recognize the vulnerabilities of specialization. Development strategies should consider the trade offs between economic specialization and diversification.

- New telecommunication technologies make possible new ways the community can develop. Communities will need to incorporate the new technologies in forecasting and planning.

Building On Strengths

Many of the problems of rural communities should be viewed as chronic and long-term, requiring a sustained effort rather than quick fixes.

Many futurists predicted the disappearance of rural communities; however, the number of rural communities has remained fairly constant. Rural revitalization is an emerging priority within the Cooperation Extension System. For this effort to succeed, it must be a long-term commitment. Rural communities display many skills in self-help activities, such as resourcefulness and ingenuity. Rural revitalization efforts must build upon the existing economic base and strengths of rural communities. In agriculturally dependent communities this implies turning attention to the agriculture-community linkages. In other rural communities, the important linkages to the existing economic and natural resource base must be recognized. ▲



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